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SUBJECT: ASEAN TAC: EU EXPERIENCE

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11. (SBU) This is in response to Reftel request for information on the EU experience with regard to accession to the ASEAN Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC). While the European Union would like to accede to the TAC, our European Commission interlocutors tell us that it may be some time before negotiations start on accession. Since the TAC does not allow non-state actors to accede in its current form, ASEAN has had to agree on a so-called "Third Protocol" that would allow "regional integration organizations" like the EU, but not run-of-the-mill international organizations like the UN or OECD, to accede. All current TAC signatories must ratify the Third Protocol before ASEAN can begin negotiating with the EU. ASEAN has advised the Commission that it expects ratification to be completed in July 2009. Further complicating the EU's effort was French accession to the TAC in 2007. This frustrated EC officials, who said the French accession undermined their argument that the EU could represent all 27 Member States. Our interlocutor did not know whether France would withdraw from the TAC once the EU accedes.

12. (SBU) Since the EU does not expect to begin serious talks about accession until after the Third Protocol has been ratified, they have no experience to offer in the areas sought by reftel.

MURRAY

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